

System Configuration Team (SCT)
Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26
Meeting Notes
May 19, 1997

Greetings and Introductions.

The May 19 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the Northwest Power Planning Council's offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was co-chaired by Jim Ruff of the Northwest Power Planning Council staff and Bill Hevlin of NMFS. The agenda and a list of attendees for the May 19 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

Bob Heinith of CRITFC led off the meeting with a statement about the Tribes' continued participation in the NMFS Regional Forum. Our intention is that Tribal staff will be sitting in on as many Forum meetings as possible, collecting information, he said. This should not, however, be in any way construed as official tribal participation in these groups, or consultation in terms of the trustee relationship with the Corps, NMFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or BPA. We'll be trying to establish a dialogue with the regional directors of those agencies at the policy level, in terms of those consultations, Heinith said.

I'm personally glad you're here, said Hevlin. I'm not sure how many more SCT meetings I'll be able to attend, but there were some loose ends I felt needed to be tied up, Heinith said.

One other thing to report, concerning the governance meeting the Power Planning Council called last week in Spokane, said Ruff. The report I received from staff members in attendance at that meeting confirmed what Bob has just told us -- that the Tribes are concerned about continued participation in the Regional Forum, and that the Tribes, specifically, want to meet with the Governors of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana to discuss salmon recovery issues. The Tribes are not interested in participating in another recovery process, whether that's the Council's Amendment process or a NMFS process, unless some very large decisions are going to be made, said Ruff. The meeting between the Tribes and the Governors is set for June 3, and the tribes are looking forward to some frank discussions at that time. The Tribes have stated their expectation that fruitful consultations will occur within the next six to 12 months; otherwise, they will think about exercising their Treaty rights. The bottom line is, the Tribes are not happy with the way things are going, Ruff said. That pretty well sums it up, said Heinith.

Finalization of Issue Summary Statements for the Implementation Team.

One of the goals of today's meeting is the finalization of this package for discussion at the June 5 IT meeting, Hevlin said. Procedural question, said Rod Woodin of WDFW -- if the party

that was essentially pushing these three issues onto the table is no longer an active participant in this forum, is there really a need to continue this discussion? That's up to the Federal government, and how they see their role as a trustee to the Tribes, Heinith replied. Bob is here and has stated that he will participate in this discussion, although we are not to construe that participation as formal consultation, said Ruff. We've been working on these issues for some time, and we want to make sure that we have characterized them correctly for IT discussion.

I guess the point is, I'm not sure what's left to take to IT, said Woodin -- there's nothing in dispute among the rest of the parties in SCT. The tribal objections remain, said Ruff -- we've taken it this far, and I'd just as soon close the loop at the technical level, and get it off our table and onto the policy table. I haven't been told by my bosses that we should discontinue this effort,

added Hevlin. What you say may be the policy-level conclusion as well, but that's for the IT to decide.

Hevlin drew the SCT's attention to Enclosure C, a summary of the Federal/state and Tribal positions on the three FY'98 funding issues, dated May 19. This summary will be the opening section of the briefing package we'll be submitting to IT; if possible, we'd like to get any comments you might have on this document at today's meeting, he said.

The first issue is pretty cut and dried, said Ruff -- should we or shouldn't we proceed with surface

bypass development at Lower Granite Dam in FY'98? We've developed a statement of support for this project, based on the Federal/state position, and a statement of non-support, based on the Tribal position. There isn't much more to say on this subject, unless someone feels that something in these statements is inaccurate.

One overall comment, that I would like to see represented in each of these issue statements, said Dave Arthaud of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes -- all of these projects are out of compliance with the Clean Water Act, specifically with the water temperature standards contained in the act. None of the fixes you're proposing will bring them into compliance. You're out of compliance, and have no plans to reach compliance at these projects; the Tribes do have a plan to reach compliance at these projects, and I'd simply like to have that noted.

Hevlin suggested that the following sentence be added to the non-support statements for each issue in response to Arthaud's concern: "One of the reasons the Tribes do not support this project is because it does not bring the project closer to compliance with the water quality standards in the Clean Water Act." That would be acceptable, Arthaud replied. In that case, we should also add a sentence stating that water temperature concerns are being actively addressed through the SCT's water temperature subcommittee, added another meeting participant. We can add that as a footnote, said Hevlin.

Other comments? asked Hevlin. Will there be any additional comments forthcoming on the issue

papers I've prepared? asked Heinith. I'm a bit disappointed that I've received only a few comments so far, most of those concerned with points of policy, rather than the technical aspects of the Tribal proposals. The Corps plans to provide detailed comments, said Bob Willis -- the document is finished, and we're just waiting for the approval to send it out. What about NMFS?

asked Heinith. We've been working with the Corps, Hevlin replied -- you can take their comments as our comments as well.

I was hoping to have some in-depth discussion of the technical aspects of the Tribal proposals at today's meeting, Heinith said -- isn't that what the SCT is all about? I'm not sure it would be worthwhile to spend time on further technical debate today, replied Boyce -- I think what we need to do today is to be sure that the Tribal positions are captured accurately in these issue summaries.

We could spend hours debating the Tribes' recommendations, or I could ask NMFS staff to spend hours developing a written response to these position statements, said Hevlin. However, what would be the point? We've already spent hours developing a NMFS position on these issues; the Tribes have chosen to recommend a different approach, and in my opinion, spending more time debating who's right and who's wrong would be unproductive at this point. I still don't think we've had adequate dialogue on the science underlying these position papers, and I guess what you're saying is, we're not going to have that, said Heinith.

The other point is, we went through a nearly identical exercise several years ago with Grant County PUD, said Hevlin -- the same arguments against screened bypass systems you make in your position papers were put forward by Grant PUD in the early '90s. The hearing, and all of the interrogatory, lasted for two years. It's all there already; we don't need to duplicate that process -- at least, that's my perspective.

Again, there really isn't anything technical to discuss on the first issue, said Ruff -- it's a basic policy question of where we should be targeting available funding. I don't agree with that, Jim, Heinith replied -- we don't even have a goal to shoot at. What is the performance criteria for the surface bypass prototype in 1997, or in 1998? We don't know, yet here we are, spending millions of dollars on this project. I think that's a big problem. The criteria is the development of a prototype that will yield 80% FPE and 95% project survival, replied Woodin -- those are the standards in the BiOp.

The whole idea behind this project is to acquire enough information to make the 1999 decision, added another meeting participant. That's what NMFS laid out in the BiOp, and that's what the Corps is using to guide its actions. The information generated by the Lower Granite test will support that 1999 decision.

The point I'm trying to make is, what kind of a performance standard needs to be achieved in 1998 in order for a decision to be made to go ahead and fund this thing in 1999? asked Heinith. Or are you just assuming that, because of the lag time in the appropriations process, that the funding will already be in hand before we have the results from the 1998 test? The 1999 budget will already have been submitted, replied John Kranda of COE. Decisions on changing the spending plan can be made after that. If you're looking for a specific performance standard number, we can't get you one at this time -- that's part of the feasibility study.

So it's a decision that will be based on feel, said Heinith. It will be based on the information we collect, replied Dave Ponganis of the Corps. All of the data we're collecting will be rolled up into the Lower Snake Feasibility Study for the 1999 decision comparing surface collection with

drawdown, transportation and other options.

Again, if we don't have measurable performance yardsticks, I think that's a problem, said Heinith -- if we don't have those, we're just shooting into the dark and throwing money away.

In any case, this document (Enclosure C) will be the cover document for the issues summary packet, said Hevlin. In terms of supporting documentation on the first issue, the Lower Granite Surface Bypass Tests, we'll include both the CRITFC and SCT position papers on Lower Granite, the Corps' response to the Tribal position paper (attached as Enclosure D), as well as the paper, requested from NMFS by CBFWA, on the importance of the surface collector to the Feasibility Study and to PATH (attached as Enclosure E).

The group moved on to the second issue summary subject: whether or not to install extended-length screens at John Day Dam, beginning in FY'98. One thing I would like to discuss today, said Ruff, is whether or not we can come to an understanding to proceed with screen installation on five turbine units at John Day in FY'98 -- to fabricate, install and test those screens in 1998, looking closely at fish condition, lamprey effects and fry effects. The proposal is that we would hold off on installation of the full complement of extended-length screens at John Day until we've done this five-unit biological test, he said.

I wouldn't necessarily support this, but wouldn't it make more sense to screen one unit rather than five? asked Heinith. One reason for doing the test as Jim outlined it is the fact that the five units would be at different places across the powerhouse, Hevlin replied. The discussion turned to the question of whether the screened units should be distributed equally across the powerhouse or concentrated at the south end of the dam, where the greatest number of migrating fish are typically observed; ultimately, it was agreed to ask FFDRWG to address the question of which units should be screened. Boyce advocated a more even spacing across the powerhouse, including Unit 6, to replicate the 1996 test at John Day. We have time to discuss this further, Hevlin noted.

The SCT spent a few minutes discussing possible test configurations before returning to the question of whether or not the five-unit John Day extended-length screen test should go forward in 1998. Ultimately, the SCT expressed support for a five-unit test in 1998; Heinith did not disagree.

Would the Corps award the screen construction contract before Congress has developed the final FY'98 appropriation out of conference? asked Heinith. Yes, Ponganis replied -- we would need to use a small amount of FY'97 funds to get the contract going. Full funding of this project would be subject to the FY'98 appropriation, and the availability of funds, added Kranda -- there will be a clause to that effect in the contract. And is there any plan to go through a NEPA process for this project? asked Heinith. No, Willis replied -- it would fall under the categorical exclusion.

Hevlin added that comment letters from the states and from USFWS, covering both the John Day Screens issue and the Bonneville Fish Passage Improvements issue, will be attached to the IT issue paper package (the USFWS letter is attached as Enclosure F; Washington's as Enclosure G). Preliminary COE comments to the Tribal plan for John Day Dam will also be forwarded with the IT package, and are attached as Enclosure H.

Moving on to the Bonneville Dam fish passage improvements issue, Hevlin asked for any comments on the support and non-support statements contained in the briefing package; none were made at this time. This portion of the package will include the Bonneville mitigation plan, as well as the Corps' response to the Tribal position (attached as Enclosure I) and the memos from the states and USFWS, Hevlin said. We'll put it all together, and submit it for discussion at the June 5 IT meeting, said Ruff.

Discussion of the Five Remaining FY'98 Issues.

The SCT previously identified five additional FY'98 funding issues, said Ruff. We wanted to find out today whether those issues require further discussion, and, more importantly, whether they still need to be elevated to the IT. We've seen how much work goes into elevating an issue to IT, said Hevlin, and I wanted to be very clear about whether SCT feels that all five of these issues still need to be elevated. Further discussion yielded the following disposition for each item:

- a) Completion, Maintenance and Improvements to the Screen Bypass Systems at the Lower Snake River and McNary Dams. It was agreed to remove this item from the list of issues for IT consideration.
- b) Juvenile Fish Separator Evaluation. It was agreed to revisit this item at a future SCT meeting.
- c) Completion of the John Day Smolt Sampling Facility. This facility is already under contract, so we're committed to completing it, said Kranda -- there isn't much point in further discussion at this time. It was agreed to remove this item from the list of issues for IT consideration.
- d) The Dalles Spillway Survival Study. It was agreed to revisit this item at a future SCT meeting.
- e) Turbine Passage Survival Study Program. It was agreed to revisit this item at a future SCT meeting.

Hevlin suggested that items B, D and E be revisited in the course of the normal SCT prioritization process later this summer; no objection was made to this course of action. In the meantime, it was agreed that none of these five issues is ripe for IT elevation at this time. It was also agreed that further discussion of the FY'98 budget priorities will take place at the June SCT meeting. Hevlin requested that, between now and the June meeting, the other SCT participants hold internal discussions within their agencies to develop a list of low-priority items for FY'98, in case Congress does not award the full \$127 million the Corps has requested.

Review of FY'99 Project List; Development of Work Plan to Address Issues and Priorities.

By the end of June, the Corps needs to present an initial submission on the FY'99 Columbia River Fish Mitigation budget to O&B, said Ponganis. At the June SCT meeting, we'll need to have a fairly in-depth discussion of FY'99 priorities; in preparation for that, we'll update the spreadsheet as best we can and send it out for SCT review before the meeting.

My suggestion is that we spend a few minutes going through the current version of the spreadsheet (attached as Enclosure J) and talk about the items that we know are in the FY'99 budget, said Hevlin. Any comments you might have will provide a starting-point for the Corps thought process on next fiscal year's budget.

The group agreed to move through the spreadsheet, identifying any areas of concern or major changes in FY'99 funding needs. Those concerns and changes included the following:

- ? It was agreed to add a placeholder under Lower Granite fish ladder temperature control for FY'99.

- ? Under Ice Harbor flip lips, it will be necessary to shift some of the previous years' construction funds into FY'99 due to the inability of the contractor to complete construction in FY'98 -- in other words, some of the FY'97 construction dollars will be shifted to FY'98, and a portion of the FY'98 dollars will be shifted to FY'99, said COE's Mike Mason. The total cost of this project may also increase slightly.

- ? The placeholder for Ice Harbor fish ladder temperature control will shift from FY'98 to FY'99.

- ? As agreed at previous SCT meetings, the McNary maintenance facility will not be funded. Funds listed for this project in FY'98 and FY'99 will be eliminated in future spreadsheets.

- ? At John Day, the funding amounts for surface bypass and the spillway crest drawdown study will be changing, based on the outcome of further discussion of these items. Exactly how they will shift is impossible to say at this time, said Kranda. If drawdown is the option chosen, the question becomes, why spend \$20 million on a surface bypass prototype that would then become redundant? said Ponganis. We hope to have enough information by 1999 so that that decision can be made.

- ? It may be necessary to add funds in FY'99 for construction of whatever fix is agreed to for The Dalles emergency auxiliary water supply.

- ? Some funds will need to be added to the program for Bonneville PH2 FGE work in FY'98 and FY'99, said Kranda -- at this point, no specific numbers are available.

- ? Additional funding will also need to be added in FY'99 for Lower Columbia adult passage improvements -- again, no specific numbers are available at this time.

So for the June 16 SCT meeting, you'll provide an updated spreadsheet reflecting these changes, including whatever specific funding numbers you can produce by then? asked Hevlin. Yes, Ponganis replied. I guess what we want from that meeting, Dave, is some idea about what the SCT membership feels should and should not be included in the FY'99 budget, and whether \$118 million is an appropriate figure for the FY'99 CRFM budget estimate the Corps needs to submit in July, said Hevlin. That's correct, Ponganis said.

Schedule Options for Completion of John Day Flip-Lip Installation.

Stanger distributed Enclosure K, which included the following information:

STATUS

- ? Flow deflectors are complete in Bays 18 and 19

- ? Pier nose extensions are complete in bays

- ? Bulkhead was removed from Bay 19 on April 28; that bay was available for spill May 5

- ? With removal of that bulkhead, COE was able to begin spilling from Bay 18 on April 28
- ? Contractor stopped work after removal of Bay 19 bulkhead

CURRENT SCHEDULE

- ? Contractor will resume construction September 1
- ? Completion date is yet to be negotiated, but will not be until FY'99 without significant contract changes -- namely, work window lengthened, acceleration, third bulkhead constructed

PROPOSED CONTRACT CHANGES

- ? Construct third bulkhead; design to allow modification for Bays 1 and 20 should a decision be made to install flow deflectors in those bays
- ? Accelerate work; double, 10-hour shifts or 5 or 6 days per week
- ? Begin mobilization in July 1997
- ? Begin construction 1 August 1997
- ? No spill for 12 hours during August 1997; spill will occur for up to 12 hours at night
- ? Complete 18 deflectors by April 1998 (?). Completion date will be negotiated with contractor

REQUIREMENTS

- ? Need decision regarding third bulkhead construction no later than June 1, 1997.

Has the Corps put together a detailed written proposal on this yet? asked one meeting participant. No, Stanger replied -- in order to do that, we'll need to get the scheduling details from the contractor. Basically, we've picked an alternative for him to give us the details on, and this is it. If those details don't match this, we'll be into a third year of construction, and we won't need to modify the contract.

What are we talking about in terms of the differences in cost between this option and a third year of construction? asked Rainey. The contractor has indicated that it will cost about the same amount of money to build a third bulkhead and hire additional crews to accelerate the 1998 work schedule as it would to move construction into a third year, Stanger replied. However, the Corps sees a definite biological benefit to getting this done in two years, hence our recommendation.

The discussion turned to the question of how this proposed construction schedule would impact the BiOp spill program at John Day. You'll be able to spill for 12 hours at night, provided that the contractor moves his equipment down into the skeleton bay, Stanger replied -- we can specify in the contract that he is required to move his equipment out if necessary. Unless he's working two 10-hour shifts, Rainey observed. That's correct, Stanger said.

It sounds like this is a best-case scenario, in terms of successfully negotiating all six of these contract changes, then having in-river conditions cooperate sufficiently to allow the work to be completed on schedule, Rainey said. In other words, I think there's a pretty good chance that, even if you do all of these things and go to this extra expense, we may still be looking at a third year of construction. Stanger replied that, in the Corps' opinion, this proposal has the potential to ensure that flip-lips will be installed in John Day Bays 2-19 by April 1, and Bays 1 and 20 by May 1.

To sum up, said Hevlin, the advantage of this proposal is that the flip-lips would be installed

sooner -- by the spring of 1998. The disadvantage is the major disruption to the late-summer BiOp spill program at John Day, in terms of both volume and spill pattern, which does not look good for late-season migrants.

Another option to consider is, if we decide a third year of construction is preferable to the disruption of the spill program this August, we could direct the contractor to concentrate his work on the bays that will give us the most bang for our buck, said Rainey -- in other words, even though we wouldn't have a full complement of deflectors in place by the spring of 1998, we can put the ones we do have where they'll do the most good. In response to a question, Stanger said that, if the contractor works five or six 10-hour days rather than two 10-hour shifts per day, some spill would be possible from Bays 19 and 20 at night, and the disruption to the August spill program would be minimized.

We've got to be able to do the BiOp spill program this August -- it's that simple, said Woodin. If the contractor works 10-hour days in August, we'll be able to do the BiOp spill program, with the exception of what the pattern is, said Willis. The group spent a few minutes discussing which bays would be shut down during certain portions of construction; eventually, NMFS's Gary Fredricks summarized this discussion by saying that it appears that this construction schedule would leave a large hole in the normal spill pattern at John Day.

After a few minutes of further discussion, the SCT declined to endorse the Corps' proposed John Day flip-lip construction schedule, on the grounds that the biological risks associated with disrupting the BiOp spill program in August would be unacceptably large. It was agreed to place the question of the optimum flip-lip construction sequence on the agenda for the June FFDRWG meeting.

Development of Work Plan to Address SCT Issues Identified in the Regional Review of the Corps AFEP Proposed FY'98 Fish Passage Studies.

At the last SCT meeting, Rudd Turner provided information about AFEP's fish passage study proposal review process, said Hevlin. It was agreed that AFEP would convene prior to today's meeting, and that SCT would discuss any issues that arose in the course of AFEP's study review process; however, that AFEP meeting will not take place until later this week. I just wanted to give people a heads-up that we may need to discuss these issues at the June SCT meeting, Hevlin said.

In terms of the schedule for developing our 1998 program, we're still on schedule, Turner said. We'll be completing the proposal solicitation next month, and will be distributing preliminary proposals to the region in early July. The package of summaries, which is what we'll be talking about later this week, went out to the region in April; the districts are going ahead with proposal solicitations right now. Comments on these summaries have been received from ODFW, WDFW, NMFS, EPA and BPA; at the Thursday meeting, we'll be discussing the proposals that elicited comments, Turner said.

If we do raise issues to the SCT, it will be in the context of the larger issues that we deal with here -- mainly, priorities, said Ponganis. One of the questions we have is the role of the newly-formed Schiwe/McConnaha scientific research group, as opposed to the SCT, in resolving whatever issues may arise. I don't even know if they're meeting yet, replied Hevlin, but that

would probably be the place to refer questions about the transport studies, avian predation studies or juvenile survival studies. Funding priority issues would probably be more appropriate for SCT, added Boyce. After some minutes of further discussion, it was agreed to ask the Implementation Team to clarify the issue of which group should oversee studies that are not directly part of capital construction or testing. And we'll discuss whatever issues arise from this Thursday's AFEP meeting at our June 2 supplemental meeting, Hevlin added.

Status Report on FY'98 Congressional Budget Process.

Any word on the status of the \$127 million budget request for FY'98? asked Boyce. I have some word, replied Ruff -- absolutely nothing is going on. They've been working on some other funding issues, and have not yet taken up the Corps appropriations package. It looks like it will be June before we see any action on the request. My sources also said not to be surprised if we don't get the whole \$127 million, Ruff added.

John Day Test Flume.

At your request, we talked about this issue at the May FFDRWG meeting, said COE's John Ferguson; The response from the people that were there was positive, although there are still a lot of specifics to be worked out in terms of the test design. We also discussed the possibility of assembling an oversight team, consisting of whoever is interested in participating, he added; a meeting of this group has been tentatively scheduled for the morning of June 2.

Originally, we were asked by our General to take this test flume concept to the region, Ferguson said; in response, we brought it to SCT. SCT asked us to take it to FFDRWG, which we did. Now we have to report back to the General. Before we do that, we wanted to bring it before SCT once again; the message today is, we heard some concerns, but no one said no. Obviously there are a lot of important details to be worked out; we think this oversight team is the appropriate vehicle for working those out. That team will direct what we do. Our intention is to report back to the General, and to tell him that the response from the region is pretty positive so far, Ferguson said.

Can you tell us what some of the issues are? asked Ruff. Applicability is one -- can you do a lab study, and draw meaningful conclusions about what a fish will do in the field? said Ferguson. We think you can, but there was some disagreement about that at the FFDRWG level. The other issue is hydraulics -- we have to be sure that the hydraulics are representative, and that's why we have WES involved, he said. There was also a lot of discussion about applicability in terms of schedule -- will the test produce results in time to help the region make some of the upcoming tough decisions? We feel that this test will be helpful to a number of those decisions -- what to do with Bonneville, John Day skelaton bays, the PH2 corner collector and guidance curtain, among others. We also discussed where the facility would be built, and what it would cost, Ferguson added -- \$4.7 million total project, including removal. The first \$1.7 million is already factored into the FY'97 budget; the remaining \$3 million for three subsequent years of testing is not currently in the spreadsheet.

In response to a question, Ferguson said that, if The General agrees, the Corps will proceed immediately with plans and specs; construction would begin no later than October 1, 1997. The

test flume would be installed by the spring of 1998, if the SCT agrees. I guess what we're saying is, we're proceeding with plans and specs, and we need to know if this is a high-priority item that should proceed, into 1998 and beyond, added another COE meeting participant.

We'll need to see some sort of study plan before we can make that decision, said Boyce. We've already handed that out, Ferguson replied -- it's already been reviewed by the Studies Review Work Group and FFDRWG. We're here today to discuss the funding issue, and to seek SCT agreement that the project should go forward. What we're looking for is approval to proceed with construction of the facility, and at least Phase I of the test program, said Willis. For the out-years, we're proposing that if initial testing yields encouraging results, we'll continue with the test program; if the 1998 results are negative, we'll shut it down.

The bottom line, I think, is that, while this may not be a silver bullet, it has the potential to provide some major cost savings if it points us toward a more successful prototype design, said Ruff. It certainly has the potential to help answer the question of whether or not surface collection is a good idea, sooner, better and cheaper than surface collector prototype tests alone can do, agreed Ferguson. After some minutes of debate, the SCT did not object to construction and first-year testing of the test flume; subsequent years of testing will depend on the availability of funds and the results from the 1998 test. If the FY'98 budget comes back from Congress at less than \$127 million, added Woodin, this project will be at the top of my list of items to be cut.

Updates.

a) FFDRWG. Ferguson said there have been two FFDRWG meetings since last month's SCT meeting; the first, held April 29, focused on gas abatement. One goal of that meeting was to reduce the 11 alternatives under investigation to a more manageable number for more detailed study; they were able to reduce the list to seven alternatives. There was also agreement at that meeting to proceed with the design of the Ice Harbor raised tailrace prototype - that's not a decision to construct and install that prototype, Ferguson added, it's just a decision to go forth and design. Also at that meeting, the question of what to do with gas abatement at Bonneville Dam was pulled out as a separate issue, because of the unique stilling basin fluctuation and design considerations at that project. COE has also issued a contract to do some research on submerged outlets -- how to pass flow without passing fish, essentially -- which could be applied at a number of projects in the system. A letter summarizing the conclusions of the April 29 FFDRWG meeting will be distributed to the region shortly.

The full FFDRWG group met May 19, Ferguson continued. We went through a huge number of issues at that meeting, he said; the main one was the 1998 Surface Collector Prototype Test at Bonneville PH1. A heads-up, said Ferguson -- one module -- one unit's worth -- will be delivered and set up by October 1997. We'll have the month of October to get set up and go through shakedown operational runs, to head off any potential operational problems in the spring of 1998.

We're trying to eliminate any probability of risk, essentially. I don't think this is a big deal, he said -- I just wanted you to be aware that there may be some special operational requests for the one unit where the prototype will be installed during the month of October. We also made a decision at the meeting about the entrance shape for the 1998 surface collector test: one slot five feet wide, and one slot 20 feet wide. The plan is to alternate those between Units 3 and 5.

The next FFDRWG meeting is scheduled for June 9, said Ferguson. One other interesting item, he said -- even with the high spill levels at Bonneville, adult fallback is quite similar to what we saw last year -- in the mid- to high teens.

b) Bonneville PH1 Surface Collector Prototype Schedule. The Corps distributed the following information sheet:

Bonneville Surface Collection FFDRWG Issue
First Powerhouse Phase 2 Prototype Pace

Background

- ? FFDRWG has been working last few months to resolve technical issues with B1 '98 prototype study plan
- ? Last FFDRWG raised the issue of how quickly we should move ahead with the Phase 2 prototype
- ? Agreed to raise it as an issue for SCT discussion

Current Program

- ? Developed to meet regional needs by aggressively developing solutions ASAP
- ? Phase I prototype tests in '98-'99
- ? Phase 2 prototype testing in '00-'01 (collection channel w/outfall and/or dewatering)
- ? Implementation decision scheduled for '01
- ? Advertised Phase 1 prototype contract on May 5
- ? Scheduled to start plans and specs for Phase 2 prototype in July 1998
- ? Currently scheduled to advertise Phase 2 prototype construction in April 1999 (\$16 million programmed for construction)
- ? Currently scheduled to advertise B1 bypass improvements (JBS mods, outfall relocation, monitoring facility) in June 1999

Issue from FFDRWG

- ? Does it make sense to begin Phase 2 design when you're just beginning the evaluation of Phase 1? Should Phase 2 be delayed?

NPP Perspective

- ? Recommend don't give up a year until it makes sense to do so
- ? Not making a decision to spend prototype funds at this time
- ? FY'98 priority decision on funds for design/plans and specs (\$750,000 total, with \$200,000 in FY'98)
- ? Can build flexibility into Phase 2 prototype design to incorporate '98/'99 results
- ? Need to balance cost of additional prototype flexibility vs. additional time to develop system
- ? FY'99 decision on advertisement of Phase 2 surface collection based on '98 results (ESBS and Phase 1 prototype) vs. advertisement of B1 powerhouse improvements.

I guess I'd like to frame this as an FY'98 priority issue, said Doug Clarke of the Corps -- is it worth spending \$200,000 in FY'98 to ensure the continued possibility of staying on track with what is a very aggressive schedule -- that's all we're really talking about today. Overall, the issue is, how quickly do you want us to move through this process? It comes down to the question of

whether we should go as fast as we can, building in as much flexibility as we can, or should we take a more cautious -- and time-consuming -- approach? said Ferguson.

The groups spent a few minutes debating this point. Ultimately, concerns over schedule slippage outweighed concerns about over-hasty action; the SCT recommended that, given the relatively small amount of funding in question for FY'98, Phase 2 prototype design/plans and specs process be allowed to proceed.

c) John Day Drawdown Studies. We have seen a draft of the John Day study authorization letter, said Stuart Stanger of COE; the draft indicates that all they will ask us to do in 1997 is scope what the Phase I study would include, and to coordinate that scope with the region. We're planning on holding public scoping meetings as part of that process, he said. The bottom line is, the official letter has not yet been received, but from what we understand, it is forthcoming. The Corps is planning a very aggressive effort to get the study plan scoping effort completed and coordinated with the region by July 15. The actual study will begin in 1998, with the goal of completing Phase I by 1999. It was agreed to tentatively schedule a supplemental SCT meeting on Monday, June 2, to allow for further discussion of this issue and several others.

d) Ice Harbor Flow Deflector Installation Schedule. We are now on schedule to complete flow deflector construction on the remaining four of the original eight bays next year, beginning September 1, weather permitting, Ponganis reported. The issue of whether to proceed with deflector installation on Bays 1 and 10, plus the training wall extension, is still up for discussion -- if we decide to go forward, construction would proceed the following year, in 1999.

e) DGAS Report -- Ice Harbor Gas Abatement Prototype. This issue was covered in item a, above.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Monday, June 16, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the fifth-floor conference room at NMFS's Portland offices. A supplemental SCT meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 2. The July SCT meeting was set for Monday, July 21; the August meeting, for Monday, August 18; the September SCT meeting, for Monday, September 15. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.